

Statement of Common Ground [SoCG] between: Warrington Borough Council, Bellway Homes (Manchester) and Andrew Peake

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 The purpose of this SoCG is to set out the latest position that has been reached between Bellway Homes (Manchester) [Bellway], the adjacent landowner Andrew Peake [AP] and Warrington Borough Council [the Council] to assist in the Examination of the Warrington Local Plan 2021-2038.
- 1.2 The content of this SoCG relates to ‘Land at Tanyard Farm, Lymm’ and ‘Land off Thirlmere Drive, Lymm’, proposed for allocation in Policy OS5 – Rushgreen Road, as indicated on the proposed Policies Map. This SoCG covers the areas of agreement between the three parties.

2.0 Site Allocation Information

- 2.1 The proposed site allocated is located to the east of Lymm and is bounded to the north by Rushgreen Road and to the south by the Bridgewater Canal. The site is within walking distance of a range of shops, services and facilities. Lymm is served by a wide range of facilities including Lymm High School, and 4 primary schools. The village also benefits from a well-serviced retail centre offering a good range of shops and food and beverage establishments; two GP surgeries; and numerous community buildings, including a library and community centre. A Sainsbury’s foodstore is also situated adjacent to the site’s eastern boundary.
- 2.2 The site is well served by public transport. Bus stops are located on Rushgreen Road, along the site’s northern boundary, and provide services to central Warrington, Stockton Heath, Partington and Altrincham.

- 2.3 The site is allocated as follows in the draft Local Plan:

Site name	Rushgreen Road
Allocation reference number	OS5
Allocation Area	4.01ha
Proposed Development	Minimum of 136 homes and a new health facility

- 2.4 The site allocation falls within two ownerships. The majority for the proposed site allocation is being promoted by Bellway (approximately 3.52ha) and comprises Land at Tanyard Farm. This part of the site is within single ownership and Bellway has an agreement with the landowner to bring forward the site for development. The part of the site within Bellway’s ownership is subject to a live hybrid planning application (ref. 2022/41134), which is seeking full planning approval for residential development alongside outline approval for a primary health care facility.

- 2.5 The western parcel, referred to as Land off Thirlmere Drive, is being promoted by a separate landowner, AP. McCarthy Stone has recently submitted a full planning application (ref. 2022/41515) to deliver a Retirement Living scheme, comprising 45 apartments with associated communal facilities, landscaping and car parking.
- 2.6 The land parcels (Land at Tanyard Farm & Land at Thirlmere Drive) can be brought forward entirely independently of each other.

3.0 Evidence Base

- 3.1 Bellway and AP have undertaken a number of environmental and technical studies during the preparation of the Local Plan, which have informed their masterplanning and delivery schedule. This material has, where of direct relevance to the Local Plan's site selection process, been shared with the Council. Relevant studies and assessments have also been submitted to support the live planning applications on the two parcels of land that comprise the site allocation. However, the Council has relied upon its own evidence base to inform its decisions.

4.0 Conclusions on the Green Belt

Exceptional circumstances

- 4.1 The WUPSVLP (SP1) includes a demonstration of the exceptional circumstances for each area, including justifying the release of Green Belt land around the outlying settlements, including Lymm. This allocation site will increase housing choice, provide affordable housing, provide the land for a new health care facility and support the vitality and viability of local services in Lymm. The green field and relatively unconstrained nature of the land will enable the site to be delivered in the early period of the Plan meeting identified housing needs in the shorter term.
- 4.2 This allocation also forms part of a wider spatial strategy that will ensure that sufficient land is provided to meet Warrington's development needs, that housing affordability is addressed, and new sustainable communities are created, in a manner that will support the delivery of strategic infrastructure that will also unlock major brownfield development sites.
- 4.3 Bellway, AP and the Council agree that exceptional circumstances exist to alter the borough's green belt boundaries to remove this site from the green belt.

Five purposes of the Green Belt

- 4.4 The Council's evidence within its Green Belt Site Assessments Collated Report (September 2021) concludes that the site allocation makes a moderate contribution to two purposes of the Green Belt, and no contribution to three purposes. In line with the methodology, the assessment concludes that the site makes a weak overall contribution to the green belt.
- 4.5 As evidenced within the Council's Green Belt Assessment (Additional Site Assessment of Call for Sites Responses and SHLAA Green Belt Sites) (July 2017), Bellway's land interests

make a moderate contribution to two purposes, and no contribution to three. In line with the methodology, the site was judged to make a weak overall contribution.

4.6 The Council's Green Belt Site Selection – Implications for Green Belt Release - August 2021 Report (GB3) also concludes that the two land parcels that make up the site allocation make a weak overall contribution to the Green Belt purposes.

4.7 Bellway and AP agree with the conclusions of the Council's Green Belt assessments.

5.0 Areas the Council, Bellway and AP are in Agreement

5.1 The following Site Policy OS5 Principles are of agreement between Bellway, AP and the Council:

- a The site is available, deliverable and achievable within the plan period.
- b An average minimum density of 30dph can be achieved on the site.
- c A minimum of 30% affordable housing can be provided on site in line with Policy DEV2.
- d Bellway will make available the land at nil cost for the provision of a new primary health care facility in lieu of their financial contribution relating to health.
- e The site can achieve the policy requirements minimum level of high-quality open space in accordance with Policy DC5.
- f A package of transport improvements as required to ensure appropriate access arrangements for the site, the provision of cycling and walking routes within the site, which connect into the wider footway network, and other necessary network improvements identified within an appropriate Transport Assessment.
- g The site makes an overall weak contribution to the five purposes of the Green Belt.
- h There are no technical or environmental constraints that will preclude the delivery of housing and a primary health care facility on the site.
- i There are no ownership or legal constraints to the delivery of housing and a new health facility in compliance with the emerging policy.
- j The site represents a fully deliverable site. The residential element of the allocation will help to meet the borough's housing and affordable housing need.

5.2 The Council's Local Plan Viability Assessment (V2) has demonstrated that the site is viable, taking into account the infrastructure and policy requirements set out in the allocation policy.

6.0 Modifications proposed by WBC

6.1 The Council has proposed selected modifications to Policy OS5 which are set out within Hearing Statement Matter 7d(ii). The extent to which these are agreed is outlined below.

6.2 **Compensatory Green Belt improvements** – Within Matter 7d(ii), paragraph 14.3, WBC has proposed the following wording to be included within clause 14 of Policy OS5:

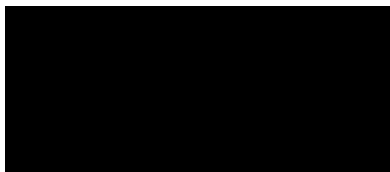
6.3 *A scheme of compensatory improvements to the environmental quality and accessibility of land remaining in the Green Belt will be required. **In the first instance, the improvements should be made in the immediate vicinity of the site and delivered by the developer. The Council will consider improvements in the wider area where it can be demonstrated that the improvements cannot be delivered in the immediate vicinity of the site or where this will provide greater benefits.** Financial contributions will **only** be considered where this would help to ensure that the benefits of compensatory improvements can be maximised by providing them in ~~the most~~ **a more** appropriate location.*

6.4 The principle of providing green belt compensatory measures is agreed between Bellway and WBC. However, Bellway have made comments on the precise wording of the policy within their response to Matter 7d (Matter Statement M7D. 09).

7.0 Signatories to Statement of Common Ground

Signed:

For Warrington Borough Council

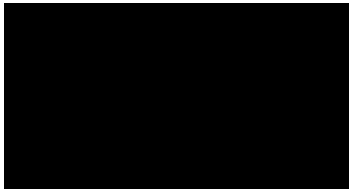


Name: Steve Park

Position: Growth Director

Date: 15/08/22

On behalf of Bellway Homes (Manchester)

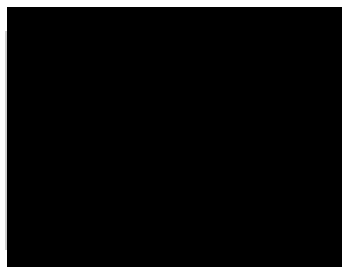


Name: Kirstie Oakey

Position: Associate Director

Date: 15/08/22

On behalf of Andrew Peake



Name:

Position:

Date: 15/08/22
